

VZCZCXR06592
PP RUEHRN
DE RUEHLGB #0858/01 3491459
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 151459Z DEC 09
FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6520
INFO RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUZEFAA/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP 0134
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0337

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KIGALI 000858

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/15/2019

TAGS: PGOV PHUM RW

SUBJECT: PSP PARTY IN REBUILDING MODE FOLLOWING LEADERSHIP CHANGE

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Classified By: Ambassador W. Stuart Symington for reasons 1.4 (b) (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: The leader of the small PSP party is a political unknown who is new to her position and has inherited a party that is still recovering from the departure of its former leader, a senator and high-profile figure, earlier in 2009. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) During a December 2 meeting with Polcouns, Solidarity and Prosperity Party (PSP) leader Phoebe Kanyange said her party's main goal is to convince Rwandans to take greater ownership of their problems, find solutions, and leave a legacy for their children. The most pressing needs of the population are access to education and assistance to farmers such as markets, roads and fertilizer. Kanyange, a francophone, disagreed with the abrupt way in which the Government of Rwanda (GOR) decided to implement the new policy of replacing French with English in educational institutions. She commented that francophone Rwandans were working to learn English but many "Ugandans" had not bothered to learn French at all. (Note: "The Ugandans" is a reference to Rwandans who grew up as refugees in Uganda. End Note.)

¶3. (C) Kanyange explained that the PSP seeks to advance its ideas through participation in the Political Parties Forum, by circulating position papers and attempting to convince others of their merits. Representatives of all parties conduct debates, engage in consultations and provide input to the GOR through the Forum. The drawback, according to Kanyange, is that participants only see documents or proposals after the GOR has already presented them; Forum members cannot initiate government policy or legislation themselves. Kanyange added that when Bernard Ntaganda, leader of the newly-formed Social Party-Imberakuri (PS-Imberakuri), made his first appearance at a Forum meeting in November, he went around during the break telling people he should be Rwanda's prime minister because he was the only one who really represented the "opposition." (Note: The Political Parties Forum is a constitutionally-mandated institution, composed of representatives of all of Rwanda's officially-registered parties. End Note.)

¶4. (C) According to Kanyange, the PSP was founded in late 2003, following the presidential and legislative elections of that year and the dissolution of the former Republican Democratic Movement (MDR) party. (Note: The MDR had a long pedigree and was one of the more prominent parties during the 1990s but increasingly suffered from infighting and finally imploded in 2002-03. When Rwanda adopted a new constitution in 2003, no MDR members came forward to register the party. End Note.) PSP's early leaders, such as former senator Stanley Safari, came from the MDR. Kanyange was PSP's

second vice president at the time. (Note: The PSP joined the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF)-led coalition for the September 2008 legislative elections, and won one seat in parliament. End Note.) Safari fled Rwanda earlier this year in the midst of his trial on genocide charges by a gacaca court. (Note: He appeared at the trial, sought and obtained a transfer to another jurisdiction, and then obtained a continuance to convoke witness for his defense before skipping the jurisdiction. End Note.) That tarnished the party's name and provoked a leadership crisis, as Stanley had been the PSP's president at the time.

¶5. (C) The party held a congress in August 2009 to choose new leadership. Kanyange campaigned hard, lobbying the presidents of the PSP's five sub-offices in Rwanda, and the congress elected her president of the party. (COMMENT: According to local press, others within the party challenged publicly the election process and results, alleging it was unfair; Kanyange reportedly said she would assign the party's one member of parliament to help reunite the party. END COMMENT.) Explaining her victory, she said that by virtue of her position within the party, she was intimately familiar with Safari's activities as party leader and could best pick up the fallen traces. Another plus, she added, was that she was physically outside of Rwanda during the genocide, making her immune to gacaca proceedings.

¶6. (C) BIO NOTE: Kanyange is approximately 40, married, with three children aged six years to seven months. A Tutsi, her family left Rwanda during the violence of 1959 and went to Burundi, where she grew up. She was born in Burundi, completed high school there, and studied at a technical institute in Kampala, Uganda. She did not attend Makerere

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University, though two of her siblings did (one currently lives in Boston, the other in Ottawa). Kanyange returned to Rwanda in 1996, worked for a human rights NGO (NFI) for several months, then joined UNICEF. She currently works as the administrative officer at International Center for AIDS Care and Treatment Programs/Kigali (ICAP), an international NGO affiliated with Columbia University that receives funding from the USG as well as from private foundations. Her workplace strictly forbids any political activities during working hours. END BIO NOTE.

¶7. (C) COMMENT: The PSP, a micro-party that allied itself with the ruling Rwanda Patriotic Front during the 2008 parliamentary elections, is still trying to find its way after losing Safari, who was a high-profile figure. Kanyange herself is a political unknown, and appears so far to have little in the way of resources, backing or policy ideas. What she has is ambition. Her prospects might improve if she were in a work situation more conducive to demonstrating her policy leadership, such as a position in government itself. END COMMENT.

SYMINGTON